

1:Opler E-5 (1931-1937)1941

(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

92

AN APACHE LIFE-WAY

881
[574]
[346]
[361] The visitors build temporary camps to the south, west, and north of the space reserved for the ceremonial tepee. A long lane to the east must be left unobstructed.

[867] At the beginning of the ceremony, custody of the girl will pass into the hands of the attendant and the singer. But before this the girl is reminded by her parents of the seriousness of her role and is advised to be obedient and cheerful. However, these ideals are not always attained.

Some of the girls are bashful. They have a time with them! They had a time with them in the old days too; I've heard stories about it. Some girls had to be whipped before they'd go through with it. Some of them got scolded before everyone. . . . They talk to her, tell her to be good, but the girl gets mean sometimes.

The exact manner of deciding when the ceremony shall begin is subject to some variation. According to one account, the proper starting-point should fall four days after the onset of menstruation. Most informants agree that the rite may begin "when everything is ready." Some see a tendency for the group in charge to set the time for fall, "when food is plentiful," although theoretically the ceremony may occur any time of the year.

[515]
[388]
[824]
[88]
[293]
[346]
[1788] Before sunrise of the first day the girl washes her hair in yucca-root suds. Then she presents herself before the attendant, either at a special shelter erected for her care or at the home of the older woman.

The attendant first puts pollen on the girl's head and face and across the bridge of her nose before anything starts the first morning. Then the woman prays over her that she may advance to good womanhood. From then on her womanhood begins. No man is allowed to go in there at this time.

[782]
[533] Then the woman arranges the girl's hair and dresses her, beginning with the right moccasin, then the left, and continuing up to the head. She ties two eagle feathers at the back of the girl's head. The girl always faces the sunrise while this is being done. The woman prays for the girl while she is dressing her, and some even sing if they have songs and the girl wants them sung. The men do not say much about this dressing. This is the woman's part, and men are not supposed to say much about it. When the girl is all dressed, it is all right for a man to see her. After the dressing you have to call the girl "White Painted Woman."

[262]
[1788] The girl must not eat anything up to now. Then, the first day, when the girl

l: Opler E-5 (1931-1937) 1941

(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8

Chiricahua

[facing p. 94]

PLATE III

881
346 •



FACING THE CEREMONIAL STRUCTURE

1:Opler E-5 (1931-1937)1941

(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

AN APACHE LIFE-WAY

94

881
793
828

through and wouldn't do anything. And now she's cross, has a bad mouth and a high temper. But she's a good-looking woman all right!

And if the girls are not of good disposition and balk, it harms not only themselves but causes it to rain and spoils the good time of all the people. That's what happened at the last ceremony, and that's why part of the dancing was spoiled. So we try to keep the girls in good humor and coax them.

After eating and listening to the old woman, the girl is ready and comes out. From here on all the people see what happens.

881
793

In spite of general similarities, the rituals of various attendants differ in detail. The prayers show minor divergences. One attendant feeds the girl throughout the four days of the rite; another asks the singer to do this. Some attendants sing for the girl, though most of them only pray. One attendant washes the girl's hair the first morning instead of having the initiate do it.

881
793
533
346
[602]

The erection of the ceremonial structure. While the attendant is dressing the girl, the singer directs the building of the tepee-shaped ceremonial structure. Male relatives of the adolescent bring to the grounds four freshly cut young spruce trees, thirty to thirty-five feet long, from which all but the topmost boughs have been trimmed, and some oak boughs and yucca leaves.

At sunrise the singer requests the girl's male relatives and some of the visitors to arrange and erect the main poles. The trees are laid on the ground in clockwise order with butts equidistant from a central point and tips extending outward. The first to be arranged is the east pole. A second pole is laid with tip pointing to the south, a third lies to the west, and a fourth to the north. At the base of each pole a hole is dug. The singer sprinkles pollen on the poles from butt to tip. Then near the leafy tip of each, in clockwise order, he ties a spray of sage and some snakeweed. To the east pole a bunch of grama grass may also be tied, and at its top two eagle feathers are so attached that they will blow freely. This is to guarantee that "nothing is to happen while the tepee is up, that no poles shall fall." To this same pole a long rawhide rope is affixed.

[188]
[189]
[182]

After a prayer has been said, knots of men lift the poles, sliding the butt ends into the holes prepared for them. As the poles

1: Opler E-5 (1931-1937) 1941

(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

MATURATION

95

are held erect, an assistant shakes an animal-hoof rattle,* and the singer begins his first chant. These opening songs are known as "dwelling songs." The first song "is about all the four poles. It is about the black horse, the stallion, the four horses, because in this ceremony a horse is given on the last day." Much of the vocalization is meaningless refrain, for the substance of ritual songs and prayers is largely implicit. But the prayer portion can be translated:

881
793
533
346

[782]
[539]

Killer of Enemies¹ and White Painted Woman have made them so,
They have made the poles of the dwelling so,
For long life stands the blue stallion.

Here Killer of Enemies and White Painted Woman have made them so,
They have made the poles of the dwelling so,
For long life stands the yellow stallion.

Here Killer of Enemies and White Painted Woman have made them so,
They have made the poles of the dwelling so,
For long life stands the black stallion.

Here Killer of Enemies and White Painted Woman have made them so,
They have made the poles of the dwelling so,
For long life stands the white stallion.

From the structure to the south, where she is caring for her charge, the attendant cries out in reverent applause when the names of the supernaturals are mentioned. Throughout the rite, whenever reference is made in the songs to Killer of Enemies,

881
793
198

* From one informant, a Southern Chiricahua man, comes an assertion that a gourd rattle may be used in the girl's puberty rite in substitution for an animal-hoof rattle. He said: "A gourd rattle as well as the deer-hoof rattle can be used when the ceremonial tepee is being put up. This is the only time it is used; just the tepee singer has it. There are four small holes on each side of it. That is what makes the sound perfect. It has no design." All other informants state that only the animal-hoof rattle, made of four or more hoofs, usually tied to a length of wood, is used.

[534]
[124]

¹ For most of the Apache people of the Southwest, Killer of Enemies is the culture hero, and Child of the Water is a subordinate brother or companion. The Chiricahua have reversed the positions of these two; indeed, some Chiricahua have eliminated Killer of Enemies altogether and claim that the name is a synonym for Child of the Water. The older heritage persists, however, in the songs of the girl's puberty rite, which mention only Killer of Enemies. The Chiricahua simply accept these references as concerned with Child of the Water.

[796]
[184]

1: Opler E-5 (1931-1937) 1941

(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

96

AN APACHE LIFE-WAY

881
346
198 White Painted Woman, Sun, or turquoise, she will utter this call.⁴

881
346
533 During a second "dwelling song" the poles are lowered until their tips meet:

[539] The home of the long-life dwelling ceremony
Is the home of White Painted Woman,
Of long life the home of White Painted Woman is made,
For Killer of Enemies has made it so,
Killer of Enemies has made it so.

881 Quickly, when the tops of the four poles meet, the rope hang-
346 ing from the east pole is wound around the others, and the frame-
574 work is secure. Now the women come from the community
kitchen, bearing receptacles filled with mesquite beans, boiled
meat, mescal, yucca fruit, and other food. They set these in an
[188] east-west line before the entrance, and, after pollen crosses have
[823] been sprinkled over the top of each by the singer, everyone
[261] gathers to eat. The conspicuous display of food is symbolic of
plenty and of the favor of the supernaturals: "Child of the
Water told the Apache to carry food into the ceremonial dwell-
ing, to grab at it, play with it, and eat it. That's why we do it;
it is his command."

881 After the meal the ceremonial structure is quickly finished.
346 The central fire pit is dug to the accompaniment of more songs.
[533] The oak boughs are tied horizontally to the poles, but an opening
is left to the east. Women bring to the entrance spruce needles
for the floor, and these are arranged by the singer and his helpers.
The ceremonial home of White Painted Woman is now ready.⁵

⁴ While it is the primary responsibility of the attendant to call thus, other women may join her: "Women, when White Painted Woman, turquoise, or sacred things are mentioned, have the right to make that call. This is true of any ceremony, not just the puberty ceremony. Also they can give that cry when the masked dancers approach, when they just begin to trot in from the east and the jingle of their pendants is heard. Any mature woman can do it, but old women do it mostly. They do it because of the religious feeling they have toward the Mountain People."

[184] ⁵ The Mescalero Apache, with whom the Chiricahua now share a reservation, use four main poles of spruce and eight others—twelve in all—for the ceremonial structure. They also build the tepee with a runway of eight smaller spruces, four on either side, stretching eastward from the doorway. The Mescalero and Chiri-

I:Opler E-5 (1931-1937)1941
(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

MATURATION

97

The conclusion of the events of the first day. --The attendant now comes forward, followed by the girl. Both are marked with pollen across the face and on top of the head. At the southeast of the structure the woman lays the skin of a four-year-old black-tailed deer. On this the girl kneels. Before her the attendant places a coiled basket tray, made of the unicorn plant, filled with bags of pollen and with ritual objects.

The attendant is the first to come before the girl. She offers pollen to the directions and then paints the girl with it, marking her from cheek to cheek across the bridge of the nose and along the part of the hair. The girl marks her in the same way. A line of persons forms to the south and files past the girl to paint her with pollen and to be painted in turn. "We motion to the directions and then put pollen on her face. She does it to us. If she is a good girl, we'll have good luck then." Mothers bring forward their children to be blessed, painting the girl for them but allowing them to receive pollen from her.

Definite curative powers are attributed to the girl:

Painting the girl and being painted by her are thought to cure sickness. Some years ago there was a girl who was deformed pretty badly. Her buttocks stuck out a back, and her chest forward. She went through the line with the others. Then the old woman, the girl's attendant, massaged her. A little while later she began to straighten up and finally got entirely well.

Chiricahua get together now to hold the puberty rite. Most Chiricahua informants claim that their tribe used a four pole tepee without runway. But a number of spokesmen have mentioned either the twelve pole structure, the runway, or both, as aboriginal Chiricahua features.

In a tale told by an Eastern Chiricahua mention is made of a "big tepee" for which the "poles were of spruce and there was a runway of trees on either side." Another Eastern Chiricahua said: "We used the tepee for the girl's puberty ceremony and had the same number of poles as are used here. I never saw one with four poles only among my people. There were four main poles."

A Southern Chiricahua claims the twelve-pole tepee for his people, but rejects the runway: "These Chiricahua never used the tepee except at the time of the girl's ceremony. Then they would put up four poles. Then they had eight more to make twelve, just as is done here at Mescalero. They didn't have the runway of small trees to the east. I never saw a Chiricahua have this before coming here."

Yet a four pole ceremonial structure is specifically mentioned by other informants of these same bands. We may suspect, therefore, that there was a great deal of local variation among the Chiricahua in respect to these details.

1:Opler E-5 (1931-1937)1941
(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

112

AN APACHE LIFE-WAY

881 arena. Sounding their call, they burst into the open space from
535 the east at a trot and circle the fire. They are greeted by the cry
of the women and the prayers of the devout.

.... They would come down at night carrying a big light. When they first came down the hill, even if the camp were a large one, they used to go around to each home and not miss a single one. Just as soon as the people saw them coming they began to pray. "Men of the Mountain,"¹ they would say, "I wish you would protect me. If anything comes to hurt me, stand in front of me and help me."

881 First the dance group "worships the fire" from the directions:

535 This is what the old man told me when I was the leader of his dancers. "The
372 first time you come in and go to the fire, go around it four times. Then approach it from the east. When you get within about eight paces of the fire, just when the light begins to shine on you, sound the masked-dancer call. Then go around the fire once. Stop at the south, go toward the fire, sway and make the call in the same way. Do the same from the west and the north. Next come back where you started from, the east, and worship the fire again from there."

881 Sometimes the ceremonial structure is circled and "blessed,"
535 each pole being approached in clockwise rotation by the single
• [346] file of dancers and clasped by the leader. Then the dancers trot off to the east and vanish in the darkness. On their way through the camps they may dance back and forth before a dwelling where there has been sickness or trouble. The entire encampment may be circled, and sickness frightened away by gesticulation and blowing.

881 With the arrival of the dancers, the restrictions applicable to
535 the onlookers come into force. No one may address or call the
784 name of an impersonator whom he recognizes; no one may point, with hand or lips, to a masked dancer; nor may anyone touch a dancer when he is in costume. "If you don't worship them in the right way, you should be frightened." However, neither men nor
[776] women confuse the impersonators with the actual Mountain Spirits. "The dancers do not turn into the real Mountain Spirits while they are dancing. They stay men but just get more strength." The restrictions are obeyed, not from fear of the

¹ A term for Mountain Spirits indicating greatest respect and used when supplicating these supernaturals or when there is reason to fear them.

PLATE VIII



THE ROUND DANCE (THE CEREMONIAL STRUCTURE IN THE BACKGROUND)

l: Opler E-5 (1931-1937) 1941
 (ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
 Chiricahua
 [Facing p. 122]

881
 535
 291

1: Opler E-5 (1931-1937) 1941

(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

132

AN APACHE LIFE-WAY

881 When no more come, he returns to the girl, removes the eagle
533 feather from the improvised paint brush, and extends the tip
793 toward her. She grasps this, arises, and follows him as he walks
backward, shaking his rattle and singing. Before they reach the
front of the ceremonial structure, he has paused four times and
sung two songs "about walking along the place of many fruit
trees."

Meanwhile the attendant has replaced the ritual objects in
the basket. She lays down a buckskin, head to the east, and
places the laden basket before it. When the singer and the girl
pause at the hide, the eagle feather is added to the tray's con-
tents.

[574] No sooner have the singer and the adolescent left the cere-
monial structure than containers of food are brought and placed
in a straight line extending east of the fire pit. The singer marks
[788] each food receptacle with a pollen cross, and the people eat.

881 After the meal the men begin to dismantle the ceremonial
346 structure, stripping the oak boughs from the sides and leaving
the framework, the four main poles, standing alone.

881 A "trail" of pollen and specular iron ore is now prepared for
533 the girl. Working from west to east, the singer outlines four
793 footprints on the skin, the first in specular iron ore, the second in
788 pollen, the third in specular iron ore again, and the fourth in
pollen. Slowly, as her guide sings, the girl leads with her right
foot and walks along this ceremonial path. At the end of the
fourth verse and fourth step she stands at the head of the hide.
Children, old people, and the infirm then walk along this same
path.

Now the attendant takes the basket tray and, as was done
the first morning of the rite, places it twenty-five or thirty paces
to the east. At a word from the singer, the adolescent runs to
the basket, circles it clockwise, and returns to the starting-place.
The call of the attendant is heard as she runs. After the run the
basket is moved westward. For two more runs an identical pro-
cedure is followed, but on the fourth and last run, the girl com-
pletely circles the basket, bends low to pick up the feather from
it, and trots east once more to some designated point. She circles
it clockwise and heads westward once again.

1: Opler E-5 (1931-1937) 1941

(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

MATURATION

133

The last run is made so that the girl will be strong, so that she will be a good runner and have a good heart [i.e., be brave]. Some used to run about a quarter of a mile to the east this last time. Because of this some girls became as good runners as men in the old days. If they have far to go, they do not have to run all the way. They can alternate between walking and running.

As the girl approaches the ceremonial structure for the last time, the attendant calls; the main poles are pushed to the east; and, as favors are tossed in the air and the children scramble for them, the girl makes her way to the encampment of her parents.

The temporary camps that have been established for the period of the rite begin to disappear. The poles of the ceremonial structure lie unmolested; they may not be used for firewood.

The girl's family stays on the grounds four days after the ceremony ends. During that time the girl can't wash and has to wear her costume. She must use the scratcher and reed for these four days too.

The girl has still another ritual duty to perform:

The little ceremony where the girl gives the horse takes place four days after the close of the big feast. A horse, any kind of a horse, is required. It always was so and has been handed down. She is still dressed in her costume. She walks the horse to the singer. That ends it. Her part is now over.

On the morning of the ninth day "before the sun comes up, the woman who cares for the girl [attendant] prepares yucca root and warm water and washes the girl's hair and entire body."

The prevailing tone of this ceremony is one of pleasure and promise. The physiological aspects of maturation are little emphasized. The behavior restrictions imposed upon the girl are not irksome, and their violation brings no really dire consequences. She is not isolated but achieves recognition as the central figure of a major social and ritual event during which she is likened to a supernatural being. Her formal introduction to adult status is accomplished in the midst of abundance, ritual safeguards, and festivity; therefore, she has little desire to return to the status which preceded the recognition accorded her.

Many heterogeneous elements combine to produce the girl's puberty rite. The singer, the attendant, the masked-dancer shaman, the dancers themselves, the musical accompanists for the social dance songs—all possess individual prerogatives which are not subject to call. The participation of these persons can

1:Opler E-5 (1931-1937)1941

(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua

MAINTENANCE OF THE HOUSEHOLD

385

are too heavy to carry along. But we take the mano which is ready made and carry it along often. Then the woman uses it on a flat rock or one with a shallow depression.

412

Some metates are fashioned by the women for themselves, however:

These metates are about two feet long and one foot wide. They have a little depression which the woman makes by pecking it out with another stone and then rubbing it smooth. A woman has just one grinder on which she grinds the same food several times if she wants to make it finer.

[324]

Some women carry these all the time. It all depends on how often we move and how far we are going. The mano used with this grindstone is about six or eight inches long, just long enough so that a woman can work with two hands. Chiricahua women kneel when grinding. We have no grinding songs.

[516]
[252]
[533]
[237]

A pounder of animal bone, or one of a stone selected because its shape conveniently fits the hand, is another utensil with which the woman equips herself.

Housebuilding.—The woman not only makes the furnishings of the home but is responsible for the construction, maintenance, and repair of the dwelling itself and for the arrangement of everything in it. She provides the grass and brush beds and replaces them when they become too old and dry. With a stiff grass broom or with a leafy branch, she sweeps out the interior if that is necessary. However, formerly "they had no permanent homes, so they didn't bother with cleaning."

462
356

The dome-shaped dwelling or wickiup, the usual house type for all the Chiricahua bands, has already been described.¹³ But a "peaked" home of brush, roughly resembling a conical Plains tepee in shape is also made. Said a Central Chiricahua informant:

342
[184]

Both the tepee and the oval-shaped house were used when I was a boy. The oval hut was covered with hide and was the best house. The more well-to-do had this kind. The tepee type was just made of brush. It had a place for a fire in the center. It was just thrown together.

Both types were common even before my time. For the girl's puberty rite the tepee type was used. Ten or more poles are used in the tepee. The number depends on the person who makes it. It is woman's work to do it, though sometimes the men would help a little.

[881]
[346]
[462]

¹³ See pp. 22-23.

342
184

A house form that departs from the more common dome-shaped variety is recorded for the Southern Chiricahua as well:

[188]
[346]

A house with sides that go up to a point has been used as far back as I can remember. When we settled down, we used the wickiup; when we were moving around a great deal, we used this other kind. No certain number of poles was used for this type. The poles were never carried along. For the girl's puberty rite my people used the tepee. I can remember this was used back when I was eight or nine years old.

This alternate house type with slanting sides was a hastily constructed and very temporary dwelling among the Central and Southern Chiricahua and is hardly comparable to the permanent home of the Plains Indians. Among the Eastern Chiricahua, however, the tepee was more common and was better made, though it never became the favored form:

A few of the Eastern Chiricahua had a tepee like that of the Mescalero. Sometimes it was made with a three-pole base and sometimes with a four-pole base. The three-pole base was more common. In my day it was cloth covered, but the old people talk of them and say that, before the whites and the Spanish were here, hides were used. But most of the people of my group used the round house.

[484]
[492]

The Eastern Chiricahua didn't drag the poles of the tepee when they moved. They put them on the front of the saddle, as many as they could carry, and then went back for the rest. Usually they just discarded them though. They could always make new ones.

342

In addition to these regular house forms, both men and women, when they were away from home, made windbreaks by "crossing some sticks and throwing brush and leaves against them."

HOME INDUSTRIES OF MEN

411
[462]
[824]

Weapons and tools.—Foremost among the man's tasks when he is at home are the making and the repairing of weapons.

The favorite wood for the bow is from the mulberry tree. Oak, locust, and New Mexico maple are also acceptable. The self-bow is the only type made. It is usually three to four feet long, "the length of two arrows."¹⁶ Almost always it has a single curve, though double-curved bows are made occasionally.

¹⁶ These would be the "short" or hardwood shafted arrows. For arrow lengths see p. 390.